

Guidelines on Ideal Exercises for Pregnant Women

Most women have a health regime which includes nutritious food and everyday exercise. When they become pregnant, it seems impossible to keep to this regime, especially in the later stages of their pregnancy. It is, however, essential that they continue to do some sort of exercise until at least the eighth month of their pregnancy.

Pregnancy leads to a lot of changes in a woman's body. As you're now eating for two, you'll gain weight which makes for increasing difficulty in moving about. Also, hormone levels increase, such as estrogen and progesterone, leading to increased mood swings and causing softening of joint ligaments. This in turn, serves to put stress on the internal organs, back and legs. Combined with the weight gain, these factors lead to increased restriction of movement.

Also, you'll tend to feel quite lethargic and a bit melancholy at all the changes in your body. However, doing the right exercises everyday can really alleviate the discomforts and enable you to prepare yourself for labor. It will also help your baby.

The first thing you need to do is sort out your priorities. Keeping your baby out of harm's way while you exercise is your first priority. No more doing five miles a day, or performing Pilates for one hour. No way! Your exercise regime before pregnancy is too vigorous for your body now!

However, all is not lost! You can still retain parts of your exercise, but you'll need to tone it down in line with the alterations of your body. Avoid all forms of exercise which put a strain on the back and the abdomen. Crunches: OUT! Exercise in smooth motions, since sudden movements such as squats can easily detach the placenta from the uterine wall.

Also, correct breathing techniques are compulsory whilst you exercise. Remember, you're breathing for the two of you now, so if you have oxygen debt, so does your baby. And at this stage, your baby's oxygen levels must remain constant for normal growth.

The first two months after conception will show a slight increase in the heart rate; about eight beats per minute. But as time passes and the baby grows, the volume of blood in your body increases and thus, heart rate will also increase. So keep this in mind when you're doing any forms of cardio-vascular exercises.

Drinking liquids is very important to keep your body properly hydrated. It is better if you take smaller quantities of liquid at shorter intervals rather than drinking large volumes all together. The same can be said of food: smaller meals at shorter intervals for pregnant ladies!

Don't start your exercise without warming up, as this can lead to muscle cramps. So begin with easy and light stretches, taking small breaks as required. You need to do some light cardio exercises at this time to improve your blood circulation.

Swimming is a good cardio exercise for expectant mothers. Pregnancy usually shifts the centre of gravity of your body, which can lead to straining of the back muscles and the spine, causing backaches. Swimming alleviates this too.

Another major preferred exercise for many pregnant women is Yoga! Yoga prevents stress on the back, at the same time ensuring that all the right muscles get stretched. It also enables one to be stronger mentally through meditation.

If you have a good health and exercise regime, you'll be able to get your body in shape for the birth in no time at all! You'll feel more energetic, enhance your blood circulation and even be able to decrease your heart rate! However, you have to remember not to overdo things. And if you experience any sort of giddiness, abnormal swelling or bleeding, stop the exercises and see your physician.